The Latin Family: A Fortress
—Gunnar D. Kumlien

THE

Commonweal

People On the Move

by Gabriel Gersh

The New York Girls

by Joe Dever

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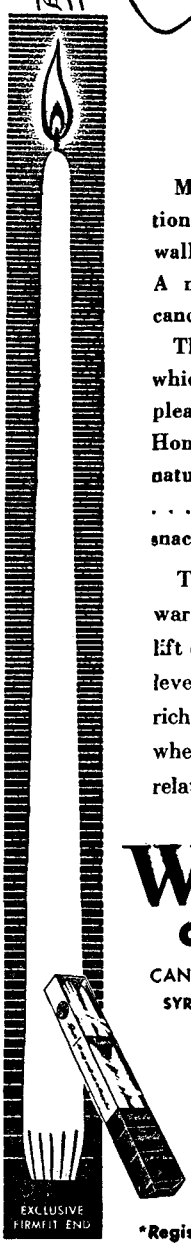

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THE

Commonweal

week by week

THE IDEA OF COMMUNISM

COMMUNISM is a three-way danger. It is, first of all, an Idea that has won the allegiance of millions throughout the world. As an Idea, Communism presents a more or less coherent philosophy of life and of Man rooted in Dialectic and Historical Materialism. Secondly, Communism is a political conspiracy; as such it is an internal threat wherever it has followers to carry out Party orders. Thirdly, Communism is a worldwide military force embarked on a program of expansion and aggression.

The three aspects of Communism go hand in hand. The Idea comes first; the Party is able to enlist from convinced ideologues followers ready to carry out subversion or, when the climate is right, to change social disorder and discontent into the coin of mass political action. This latter activity is hopeless in the United States at the present time, but such was not the case during the bleak depression years and in countries like Italy and France the unhappy social scene is still a fruitful vineyard for Communist apostles. In both these countries Communism is able to command a large number of votes. The votes come not from convinced Communist ideologues but from dissatisfied people who take that way to express discontent with their lot.

The problem of fighting Communism is to keep each of these three avenues of Communist approach closely guarded. It would not do, for instance, to concentrate so exclusively on counteracting Communism as an Idea that the avenue of internal subversion was ignored. It would not do to concentrate so completely on the problem of subversion as to ignore the military aspects. In this place or that, one or the other danger may be greater than the others, but the three-way attack must be met by an alert three-way defense.

Communism as an Idea has probably been the most neglected of all three, both here and abroad. Both left-wing and right-wing opinion in the U. S. has been guilty of obscuring the real nature of Communism-as-an-Idea. For years — with notable exceptions — many patriotic liberal Americans neglected to take a good hard look at just what Communism means in terms of ideas. The rude awakening that came after the war was really unnecessary. In the glow of the wartime alliance with Russia even stalwart generals were saying that the difference between Communism and Democracy was just about as crucial as the difference between American Democrats and Republicans. If the philosophy of Communism had been seriously examined, we might have avoided many well-meant but disastrous moves. Too many Americans felt that Communism was undoubtedly "foreign" and perhaps even on the screwball side, but were not yet sufficiently oriented to the ideological age to believe that the future of the world might actually be dependent on the abstruse dialectics found in dull, barely readable Marxist tomes. By and large, we were pushovers for the sentimentality that colored so many of our attitudes toward Russia when we fought a common enemy. That sentimentality afflicted all strata of society. It is as easy to find it in back issues of *Life* magazine as in the glowingly "liberal" opinon weeklies. (Long-time Commonweal readers will recall that in July, 1945, this magazine and the *Catholic World* were attacked by *Pravda* as the two worst examples of "the warmongering Catholic press": so do not read the above as an apologia!). A more general knowledge of the Idea behind Communism would have saved Americans from many of the illusions that drugged the nation at the time.

ON the other hand, there is a segment of American society which still stands in as much need of education about the Idea of Communism as those who thought about the subject so hazily in those days. This is a group which is ready to bracket every idea which does not conform to its own hardy right-wing convictions as "Communistic."

There is no more affinity between Communism and the kind of liberalism espoused, say, by the ADA or the American Veterans Committee than

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there is between the native fascism of Gerald L. K. Smith and the staunch Republicanism of the late Senator Taft. But, for political and propaganda purposes, this group is forever ready to attribute every idea left of Dwight Eisenhower's fictitious dead-center to Karl Marx. These *terribles simplificateurs* have created all kinds of mischief by consistently tarring patriotic and idealistic people with the Communist brush. "If supporting public housing is Communistic," many have felt through the years, "then I don't mind being Communistic." A good example of this sort of thing was found recently when a supposed authority on Communism before a Congressional committee identified the writings of two Popes as "Communistic." As long as good people and good ideas are arbitrarily associated with Communism, for partisan gain, the essential wickedness of Communism as an Idea will be obscured.

There are proposals now for a more general education in Communism, notably a widely publicized plan offered by the American Bar Association. We heartily approve such a program, provided it truly means education about Communism and is not used as a means for partisan propagandists and lobbyists to include as "Communistic" the teachings and beliefs of just about everyone who disagrees with them, from the Popes who wrote the social encyclicals to the liberals of Americans for Democratic Action.

The so-called right wing cannot alone defeat Communism in America. The attack of the Communists is directed against Americans of both parties and from every shade of the political spectrum. We need to fire our volleys against Communism from both left and right. The sooner this simple fact is generally understood the better all-round. No group of Americans is the special target of Communism, and none has a monopoly on anti-Communism. With wider understanding of the Communist Idea, it might become clear to all that however we Americans may disagree among ourselves we face in Communism a common enemy and will either have to hang together or hang separately.

NEXT WEEK

MICHAEL P. FOGARTY writes from England about Catholics in the social sciences and the need for synthesis:

"I do not mean that it is a mortal sin for a Catholic to become the world's leading expert on monopolistic competition, or to join the happy Cambridge band which has recently measured the elasticity of the demand for fish and chips and proved that dried fruit, to the average consumer, is a substitute for apples but a supplement to bananas. In a world where the Christian synthesis made up the warp and woof of everyone's personality, Catholic fish-and-chip elasticity measures could purr away with their Holleriths the whole week through and turn up at Mass on Sunday with the consciousness of duty well done. But in the world we actually live in, if you happen to be a Catholic and to have a mind at all, you can never quite get away from the itch for catholicity. You do not simply want to achieve catholicity in your own ideas. You want to proclaim it; for the tremendous and impressive thing about the Christian way of looking at life is that it is as broad and comprehensive as life itself, and it loses half its power to impress when it is presented in bits and pieces instead of in all its catholic sweep."

"THE FRENCH LINE"

WE note that in the New York area and probably elsewhere, showings of "The French Line" have been scheduled for neighborhood theaters, including drive-in movies where these days children are always among those present. The editors of this magazine have consistently exerted their influence against the notion of arbitrary state censorship, because the potential threat to freedom of speech and expression at the hands of the state has been to us a consideration of primary importance. It should be clear, however, that movie producers must not abandon self-regulation. To do so is simply to cry for the state to take an unwelcome hand in controlling films.

The necessity for self-government by movie producers has been outrageously flouted by Mr. Howard Hughes and RKO studios in the case of "The French Line." The picture is a blatant exploitation of sex, exceeded in its vulgarity only by its advertising campaign.

Before it was released, "The French Line" was denied the Hollywood Production Code seal of approval. At the time Mr. Hughes refused to make the changes necessary to win this approval, and although he is a subscriber to the Code, refused to comply with the group's decision. Despite the denial of the industry's own seal of approval, he is having some success in his efforts to give the film wide distribution.

In the case of "The French Line" the public has received the exact opposite of the responsible behavior it is entitled to demand in these matters. Those inside and outside the movie industry who fear and oppose arbitrary intervention by the State should see to it that Mr. Hughes reaps no rich rewards at the box-office.

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BLACKBALLED

FROM time to time we consider it our duty to comment on items which appear in the Brooklyn *Tablet*. We do this in order to bring certain matters to the attention of those of our readers whose avocational duties do not require them to read everything. As a public service, then, we wish to inform Commonweal readers that as far as the *Tablet* is concerned, Frederick Woltman has been dropped from the roster of "true" as opposed to "pseudo" anti-Communists.

Mr. Woltman's offense, of course, was that he wrote the recent series in the Scripps-Howard papers which described Senator McCarthy as a major liability to the cause of anti-Communism. We should say, however, that there is a minority point of view, represented by *Tablet* letter-writers who seem to suspect Woltman did not *really* write the series after all. Just where Mr. Woltman was confined while all this was being done in his name we have not yet been able to determine.

To the *Tablet,* Mr. Woltman's defection from the true cause must have been a particularly bitter pill; after all, he did win national fame precisely as an anti-Communist before it became fashionable and in years gone by was often denounced as a Red-baiter. These things do happen, however, and let it be said for the *Tablet's* devotion to Pal Joey that it has not wavered. In its pages you are still pro-McCarthy or you are no anti-Communist. As far as the *Tablet* is concerned, Mr. Woltman has had it.

ONE MORE CONFERENCE

MR. Molotov is not one to leave advantages lying around unused. Therefore he was hardly unpacked back home in Moscow before he dispatched notes to France, Great Britain and the United States requesting a new conference at Geneva on European problems. At this new conference he presumably would put forward his familiar proposal for a series of non-aggression pacts in Europe, American withdrawal from the Continent, and the unification and neutralization of Germany.

Last year these proposals were rejected by the Western nations. But that was last year. Today the United States has thrown away much of its prestige, and by virtually abstaining from the Geneva conference conclusion has, in the eyes of Europe, disassociated itself from the march of events. Mendes-France, in the opinion of many, has proved that you can negotiate successfully with the Communists. These people do not realize that it always has been possible to negotiate with the Communists — provided that you handed over what they wanted. But this point of history does not seem to register. The vision of a general negotiated settlement with Russia is all too beautiful—and now it seems within grasp.

The British government agrees with the United States about the futility of another conference. Mr. Aneurin Bevan does not. He and his supporters cling to their ideological dreams about Revolutionary Russia and recently have proposed the creation of a united, neutralized Germany to be followed by general world disarmament—just like that. Mr. Bevan may sound like Little Red Riding Hood negotiating with the Wolf, but he has chosen in German rearmament an issue which has profound emotional appeal in Britain. The Molotov proposal is just the token the Bevanites need to exploit British sentiment against German rearmament.

The new Molotov proposal will be rejected by the three Western powers, but it will live on in the hearts of those who are tempted by neutralism. Public support in Britain and France for EDC and German rearmament was wavering even before the Soviet note. Now Mr. Molotov may have proven that a little letter-writing can pay big dividends.

COSTLY SAVINGS

NOT even the most dedicated Fourth-of-July orator would be likely to claim that U. S. prestige abroad is now at an all-time high. This is true for a variety of reasons, some inevitable and some not. And while popularity is not a primary object of national foreign policy, its possession does indicate a certain fund of good will among other nations which is at once pleasant and useful. Popularity is not always possible for a nation of great wealth and power, but to throw good will away unnecessarily is foolish.

Yet this is precisely what we are doing if a recent decision of the House Appropriations Committee is allowed to stand. In the process of cutting President Eisenhower's foreign aid request by thirteen per cent, the House Committee completely eliminated the money requested by the President for our share of the UN technical assistance program. Withdrawal of U. S. support would probably mean the complete collapse of this key program which is of vital interest to underdeveloped nations.

For a nation like the United States the amount involved was relatively small — seventeen million dollars. But if the savings are small, the loss is great, not only to the nations which will not receive technical assistance but to the United States itself in terms of world respect. Administration supporters

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will fight hard to have these funds restored before the action is made final by Congress as a whole. In that effort they deserve every support.

INDOCHINA POST-MORTEM

THE deed is done; recriminations now about who was responsible for the Indochina catastrophe will serve no purpose but that of spite. We leave the wreckage to the historians and to the campaigners this November.

At least we have an end to the killing. For that we must thank God. For the first time in the lives of many Americans — including those now of military age — the world is free of organized war. One might take an appalled moment to look back that incredible distance to 1932 when war began and the Japanese took over Manchuria—with 150-mile per hour biplanes and horse artillery and primitive motor trucks. But are we now at the end of a drama or of an act?

Incidental music continues as the lights go up—dissonant sounds from Kenya, Malaya and North Africa. But for now the curtain is down, and M. Mendes-France is the man who put it down.

The terms he obtained from the Communists were better than might have been expected, for the French army was tragically weak. Viet Nam is divided. There will be a demilitarized zone along the seventeenth parallel, and a withdrawal of French armed forces from the north, and, supposedly, of Viet Minh guerrillas from the south. People who wish to travel to the zone controlled by the side to which they are committed are supposedly free to do so. Whether the Communists will permit Vietnamese anti-Communists actually to leave Communist territory remains to be seen. Viet Nam and Laos may not import arms and may not form alliances or permit the building of foreign bases on their soil. The same restrictions are placed on the Viet Minh-controlled sector, but, again, the Communist definition of the truce terms may prove somewhat different from the Western definition. An army which essentially is a guerrilla force is notoriously difficult to control, as Canada, which with India and Poland is expected to supervise the truce, undoubtedly realizes.

Cambodia, which has been stubborn in the past, got stubborn again in the last hours of the Geneva conference and was rewarded with much better terms: the Communist troops will not regroup, they will get out. The country is free to form alliances and to invite friendly powers to build bases.

But the sum of the agreement is an effective loss of Indochina to the West. North Viet Nam will never be surrendered by the Communists. South Viet Nam will be neutralized at best, and may quite possibly slip under the bamboo curtain, either as a result of the elections scheduled for 1956, or as a result of continued subversion. The problem in Viet Nam is that only the French will be able to exert real power there; the Vietnamese army will be paralyzed under the truce terms, and it is doubtful that the people of the country are going to feel any kinder to French Colonials now, after defeat, than they have for the past decade.

There is one qualification to this prediction, and it is one of the two small pieces of hope which may be found lying in the wreckage. The first hope is that the new Vietnamese government of Ngo Dinh Diem, which did not sign the truce and bitterly fought its negotiation, may redeem non-Communist nationalism in the south. This government might prove to be the government Indochina has needed for these long years. The people of Viet Nam have a historic antipathy towards China. If the Viet Minh, which still has its non-Communist element, begins to be absorbed by China as North Korea was absorbed, then there might be a reaction against China from which Ngo could profit.

The second small hope has to do with China itself. For the first time in its existence, except for a brief period after the expulsion of the Nationalists, the Chinese Communists are free of war. China is no completely subservient satellite of Russia, and with its new prestige and its new peace it may turn its attention to defining its relationship with the Soviet Union. Here again there is at least a chance of friction. It is not the kind of hope on which to build a policy, as some would do, but it is a silver thread among the black, and this is a time for searching out the silver threads.

THE HAINAN INCIDENT

THE dangerous events last week off the China coast prove how close the world still is to war. First there was the inexcusable shooting down of a Cathay Pacific airliner, followed by the attack on American planes which resulted in the destruction of two Chinese fighters. At this writing, the American carriers are still in the area. (And there is an ironic element in the blame certain Britons are heaping on the U.S. for, it would seem, the fact that our planes successfully defended themselves.) Now that there is peace in Indochina it would be folly both for China and the U.S. to become involved in hostilities; we hope that by the time this editorial appears the atmosphere around Hainan will be cooler.

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People on the Move

SINCE THE RISE OF HITLER MILLIONS ALL OVER THE EARTH HAVE BEEN HERDED FROM ONE PLACE TO ANOTHER.

GABRIEL GERSH

EVER since the end of World War II, a reshuffling of millions of people has been going on all over the world. Whole communities—Moslems, Arabs, Hindus, Jews, Poles, Germans—have been shattered and scattered like anthills trodden by a giant boot. We have called them "displaced persons," "fugitives," "refugees," expellees," "émigrés," or "emigrants," and each name has its special political significance.

The phenomenon of human mass-migration is not new. Throughout history, the human race has been on the move. A schoolboy learns in one of his first lessons how the early Israelites crossed the desert to conquer their promised land; later he learns how successive waves of colonizing Angles, Saxons, Danes and Normans helped to form the British nation; how British emigrants built up the dominions, and how Europeans emigrated in masses to the United States. Nevertheless, the present convulsion differs in several important respects from previous population upheavals.

First, in point of magnitude. The present movement began with Hitler's rise to power in Germany in 1933. First came the refugees from Nazi political and racial persecution. Then, with the outbreak of World War II, came the flight of whole communities ahead of the advancing armies and the Nazis' forced transfer of some eight million workers from occupied territories for slave labor in Germany.

Millions were uprooted during the war, but millions more have been uprooted since. By a thorough act of "human engineering," the Soviet government "shifted" Poland a hundred miles or more to the West; the mass-migration of nearly five and a half million Poles from land east of the Bug river, ceded to Russia, to lands east of the Oder river taken from Germany, resulted. Nearly nine million Germans were expelled to make room for these Poles—a population exchange involving fourteen and a half million people.

Under the terms of the Potsdam Agreement, three and a half million Germans were expelled from Czechoslovakia and half a million more from Hungary. Austria was allowed to deport one hundred and fifty thousand *Reichdeutsche*. Yugoslavia and Rumania added their quota of unwanted Germans. As a result, of the forty million Germans in the Western Zones, six and a half million have been expelled from Poland and Czechoslovakia and another eight hundred thousand are German refugees from the Russian Zone. In addition, there are over eight hundred thousand other stateless refugees in the area. In Schleswig-Holstein nearly half the population are refugees and expellees, while Denmark is burdened with about three hundred thousand Germans who overflowed its frontiers.

Outside Europe, population upheavals have been on an equal scale. The Japanese, who spread themselves by penetration, colonization and conquest, have been herded back to the narrow confines of their islands. The Chinese population has ebbed and flowed with the civil war like a vast tidal movement. In India, partition into two States has meant vast communal migration. Millions of Moslems have trudged from India to Pakistan, and millions of Hindus from Pakistan to India. In the Middle East, over eight hundred and fifty thousand Arabs have fled from Israel to surrounding Moslem states. And so it goes on—a mass-migration which has become a *danse macabre*.

A second difference between past and present emigrants is that the latter find all too often that escape is barred. A century ago, victims of political persecution or hunger could, and did, find their way out in emigration to the New World. Today, admission to the United States is reduced to a trickle. All over the world, even in frozen Antarctica, there are "No Admittance" notices.

A third difference is that today our conscience, at least temporarily, is sorely disturbed and troubled by these population shifts. In the days of sailing-ship emigration to the New World, it was not unusual for as many as one out of every three passengers to perish on the way. Today, wherever there are reports of mass-sufferings, there is a call for international relief and assistance. The setting up of government and private relief and refugee organizations at least shows recognition of the problem. At the same time those actually working on resettlement questions know that

Mr. Gersh is a New York newspaperman who has worked both in the United States and abroad.

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these efforts represent little more than a flirtation with the problem. Our social conscience is stirred but the vastness of the challenge—the millions of unfortunate people involved—has dulled our comprehension and anesthetized our senses to the human misery and individual tragedies these figures represent.

IT is true that the Western nations do not bear major responsibility for the upheaval; this lies with the past rulers of Nazi Germany, with Soviet ruthlessness, with contending governments in India, with political and social upheavals in the Middle and Far East. Nevertheless, even in the West, there is little sign that the "No Admittance" notices will be removed to permit an influx of immigrants on any major scale.

Why did the United States bar further immigrants? There is no single answer to this question. It is not one of space—North America is still much less densely populated than Europe—nor merely of food production. One important factor, however, has been the emergence of strong American labor unions, opposing mass immigration as a threat to their own wage standards. The same tendencies manifest themselves in the British dominions, in South America and even in Asia; in general one can say that in the modern world of compact nation-states with highly organized trade union movements, so-called "free" mass immigration, that is, immigration not planned by Governments or an international authority, has virtually come to a halt.

One should note some of the immediate political results in Europe caused by the limiting of the United States immigration quota in the 1920's. From Poland, for instance, Polish workers had been migrating in large numbers to Chicago's stockyards, Detroit's factories, the Pennsylvania mining areas; Polish Jews were leaving for the East Side of New York. Suddenly this outlet was practically closed. The immediate result was a sharp increase of Polish anti-Semitism, and a movement towards Fascist governments. In Italy, the sudden damming of emigration to America first helped Mussolini to power, and later helped him to popularize his doctrine that Fascist Italy had need of a new Roman empire to absorb her population surplus.

There was this truth in Mussolini's propaganda: over the last hundred years or so, countries like England, France, Holland and Belgium were certainly helped in maintaining high standards of living for their growing populations by possession of colonial empires that provided them with cheap food and raw materials. To a degree, these empires were substitutes for emigration outlets.

The fallacy behind the arguments of Mussolini, Hitler and the Japanese war lords was that they were preaching a doctrine of empire-carving in a period when imperialism had already become a thing of the past. Today the colonial principle is everywhere changing under the weight of unalterable circumstances. Within the British Commonwealth, the process has become well-defined. Self-government has emerged in India, Pakistan, Ceylon and Burma. The Dutch have had to face similar insistence on independence for Indonesia. Only in the West Indies, in Africa and certain parts of Asia can colonial status be even temporarily maintained, and even here only by a drastic change in character and attitude. The question of Africa is no longer one of cheap labor, or cheap raw materials for Europe, but of a joint development of African resources in which the native Africans themselves must play an increasing part.

All this means that we must look at population and migration in a new perspective. The period of unplanned, spontaneous emigration is gone; so is the era of colonial exploitation, in the good and bad sense, by advanced Western nations. The population problem of today is a global one: that of two and a quarter billion people, white, black, brown and yellow, competing for sustenance and a share in the world's resources. And, as the former colonial peoples increase in numbers and demand higher living standards, the problem will become more acute.

THERE are only about three billion acres capable of growing the products needed to feed and clothe the human race. In our grand-children's time, there will be at least three billion mouths to feed. Thus, even if we can arrest the widespread erosion which is going on at an alarming pace, there will still be only one acre of productive soil for each person.

What that foreshadows can be estimated from the position of a country like Great Britain. If each Englishman were given his allotment and told to feed and clothe himself, his plot of productive soil would be barely half-an-acre. From that, if he had to be self-sufficient, he would have to get all he eats, all his clothes, his tobacco and newspapers. As it is, with intensive cultivation and husbandry which bears comparison to the best in the world, Great Britain today can grow little more than half its food, not to mention the other requirements. By new improvements, recovery of lost lands and heavy investments in agriculture, Great Britain is trying to increase its agricultural yield by more than half again over prewar standards. But it will still depend on others for over a third of its food.

If that is the best the British people can do by coaxing and cosseting their half-an-acre-per-head, how, allowing for primitive cultivation and prodigal misuse of the land, is the world's population going to fare on one-acre-per-head? (And remember that if things go on as they are, and erosion is allowed to continue at the present pace, even that acre will shrink.)

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The complacent may reply that Malthus argued the same sort of thing a hundred and fifty years ago—that the population would multiply beyond the limits of the earth's productivity—and point out how wrong he was. Two developments disproved Malthus — one was the opening up of the prairies of North America and the pampas of South America and the new lands in Australia, New Zealand and South Africa; the other was the scientific discovery of artificial fertilizers. Today there is no virgin soil to be broken. We have to look to human ingenuity—like the discovery of the new drug which renders animals immune from tsetse diseases, and so allows cattle-breeding and meat production in tropical Africa.

Another reply is that population experts are always wrong. It is true that where there is advancing industrialization and a rising standard of living, there is a corresponding decline in the reproduction rate. This

has already happened in the West, but the rule is still far from applying in Russia, China, India and Indonesia, and even further away among the so-called backward peoples where the only check on population growth has been a high death rate.

Today every scientific advance tends to accelerate the increase. Take one small instance which is illustrative of the whole: in British Guiana, with a stationary population of four hundred thousand, two-thirds of the population used to live in severe endemic malaria conditions; the birthrate was low and the infantile and adult mortality rates were high. In 1945, a scientific mission advised the use of DDT to attack the mosquitoes, which bred in the wooden houses. At an annual cost of seventy cents per person, the malaria-mosquito is now completely under control and malaria is rapidly disappearing from the colony. Result: the birthrate has doubled. The infantile death-rate has declined from two hundred and fifty per thousand to sixty-seven per thousand and the population is increasing by ten per cent annually.

It is no use prescribing "universal birth-control" as a solution; apart from the moral and religious difficulties, the major area of this problem lies among a billion illiterates who simply cannot comprehend "family-planning." A world population of three billion by the turn of the century is a conservative estimate.

THE pressure on the world's acreage of productive land is serious enough, but when that pressure is localized as in China and India, and more and more people are forced to subsist on less and less and poorer and poorer land, it becomes desperate. There is always the likelihood that the hoppers may become locusts swarming over into new areas—as the white Governments of South Africa, Australia and New Zealand acutely realize.

In our school-atlases the apparent empty spaces, apart from Siberia, are places like Canada, Australia, South Africa and the Rhodesias. That is to say, their populations are relatively small compared with their areas. For example, Australia, a continent, has only seven and a half million inhabitants while the subcontinent of India, only half its size, has over four hundred million and an annual increase of about fifteen million.

While the total areas of these countries are misleading, since perhaps the larger proportion of Canada, with its Arctic and sub-Arctic tundra, Australia, with its deserts, and South Africa, with its Bush Veldt, are unproductive and to a large extent uninhabitable, there is no doubt that they could absorb millions of immigrants. And in the totality of world needs, they will have to. They recognize this and actively promote migration, but discriminate against non-whites.

Yet it should be clear today that the problems of world population policy have become insoluble along national lines. The pressure of population can be relieved in two ways—either by international dispersal or by increased international productivity to provide for congested populations. The paradox of the agricultural position is that fewer, not more, people are needed on the land. Subsistence farming means diminishing subsistence. Present schemes for India, for instance, include, in addition to the reclamation of six million acres, industrialization to draw off the succeeding generations who are now trying to share the family farms. The Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations presses such industrialization as part of its plans for increasing world food production.

Coupled with that there must be international schemes to arrest erosion, to reclaim abandoned deserts (as has been done in Palestine), to improve the production from our limited acreage by increasing the yield of animals and plants, by improved breeding and nourishment of the soil, by winning the battle against pests and by ambitious international Tennessee Valley Authorities to provide irrigation for the regenerated soil and power for ancillary industries.

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FROM ITALY

The Latin Family: A Fortress

Rome

ONCE upon a time there was a young man who fell desperately in love with a beautiful young woman who returned his love, but was cruel and selfish. They married, and the young man's mother gave them her blessing. But they had not been married for long when the young woman said to her husband: "I want your mother's jewels." The young man went to his mother and took her jewels from her. But the young woman still was not satisfied. She said to him: "I want your mother's house." The young man went to his old mother and turned her out of her house. But the young woman still was not satisfied and said to him "I want your mother's heart." The young man went to his mother and tore her heart out and ran away. He ran so fast that he stumbled and fell. Then the bleeding heart he was holding in his hand began to speak and said: "Darling—did you hurt yourself?"

So the old legend runs, and in the Latin countries it has even been set to music. It is infinitely sad music, like a half-forgotten motif, somewhere far away. It is a drama between women illustrated in music by a man. And it is a drama which among Latins never fails to move, and never can be ridiculed by the trivial comic stories in circulation about mothers-in-law, for it deals not only with a mother-in-law, but with a mother. A mother is all-important and her pain leaves no one indifferent. Perhaps it is devotion to Mary reflected in human hearts, even among nonbelievers.

The community of members of the same family is so much stronger in southern Europe than in the north that the other community to which all of us belong, the community of society, felt so strongly in the north, appears to southerners as something remote and unreal, even hostile. Sometimes the close-knit Latin family reflects and focuses human problems which are actually common to both north and south, but are not so easy to perceive among northerners cold and shy as they ever are to their closest relatives.

These problems might be symbolized by the bleeding heart of the mother in the fable. Everywhere the two central figures in that drama are the mother-in-law and the daughter-in-law, rather than the son-in-law or the father-in-law, who seem somehow to be in the background. The opposition is between these two women; the closer they live together the stronger the opposition; there is something of the fatality of Greek tragedy in it. This fundamental opposition can be modified or even neutralized by economic or social factors, and remain only potential and therefore difficult to perceive. But usually the daughter-in-law's instinct to separate her husband from the family-nucleus in order to form together with him a new and different nucleus is as sure as the instinct of a new chick to break its egg-shell.

There is a similar instinct in the young man, but it is much weaker and less exclusive. The opposition between the son and the mother-in-law or between the son and the father-in-law or even between the daughter and the father-in-law cannot be compared to this fundamental opposition between daughter and the mother-in-law. The men in this context are often rather passive and elusive figures: the son, who so often betrays his mother, and the father, who cautiously remains aloof from what according to his view is nothing but the "intrigues of women"—failing to understand the deep personal tragedy felt by the mother who in spite of everything cannot cease to love the son whom she is losing forever.

A strange, outwardly invisible matriarchy therefore arises behind the intricate branches of the family tree, a matriarchy which is completely independent of, and may even neutralize, the patriarchy which juridically controls the family in most countries. In each set of children the young men tend to be attracted to the families of their wives, whereas the young women more easily remain attached to their own families; their children are thus in turn more closely attached to the families of their mothers than to the families of their fathers. It often happens that the closest family relations do not follow the common family name but the maternal family line. These children often have closer relations with their grandparents on their mother's side than with their father's, with their cousins on their mother's side than with the cousins on their father's side. If, as frequently happens, the mother is particularly attached to her sons and the father to his daughters, the mothers will in the end suffer all the greater sacrifice.

IN other aspects the closely-knit Latin family appears to be a warm, closed circle; its members love each other and do not refrain from showing it with an overflow of tenderness. There is no question of inhibitions or complexes; the general cajoling and bantering atmosphere may seem exaggerated to a European from the north—perhaps not without his feeling a sting of envy. It is a small society all on its own; the members are delighted to recognize in each other common family characteristics. Family quarrels are often short, and thanks to the meddling of the other family members, frequently end in sentimental reconciliations. If the banter is the result of a strong affection among the family

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members, this affection seems in turn to be increased by the banter, as our external behavior intensifies our feelings.

It seems to be precisely this close relationship with the men of the Latin family—with father, brothers, sons and husbands—which makes the Latin woman so strangely indifferent to emancipation and feminism. She is quite satisfied with the way she is able to develop her personality in this world of hers without feeling the necessity to make headway on her own in society, other than indirectly through the men. After all, the man who betrays his mother for a wife is merely attracted from the intimacy of one woman to the intimacy of another.

Latin children, even if their parents are poor, are brought up with an abundance of love, to the point where many of them are terribly spoiled and lack the most elementary self-control. The parents hold that life itself will be harsh and cold enough for the children later on: why then anticipate this harshness and coldness through severe education? And it is strange how many of these sometimes shockingly spoiled children will without difficulty become perfectly adjusted adults, well-educated and at the same time pleasantly spontaneous in their ways. Love is everything in the Latin family, and it seems to be expected that all the rest will be added to it.

These strong family ties lead to other results which may seem almost fantastic to the European of the north, so often caught in his "incurable loneliness." Throughout a lifetime married couples may be attached to one another in a way which passes beyond the physiological aspect of love. They bear with one another to the point of mutual self-sacrifice. It happens in Italy, for example, again and again that an old husband or wife will die within hours, or a day or two, of the death of their partner—of a broken heart, as in the romantic novels of the past.

THE Latin family is not only more united than the family in north Europe, it is more of a closed entity. In the Latin countries shutters jealously closed at night and high walls indicate a desire to ward off the indiscreet observation of the outsider, and contrasts with the low hedges, frequent absence of gates, and open windows of the northern home. To be invited to dinner by a family in north Europe means little; it is a superficial courtesy extended even to complete strangers. But to be invited to dinner in a Latin family means a great deal more, and implies a certain intimacy. For the southerner, the Latin family is something as intimate as is the individual internal world of the northerner, a private place where he does not easily let other people enter.

It seems as if Latin family life is founded on the deep conviction that during our short life there are only our closest relatives and above all our children who are able to give us warmth and understanding and to whom we can give warmth and understanding. Our great-grandparents, if they live long enough to know us, belong to another world. Our great-grandchildren, if we live long enough to know them, will have their own world. In the third generation back and forwards there are only strangers. Our grown cousins are strangers too; all around us are indifferent strangers—if not bitter enemies and ruthless competitors. The great circle of the society to which we belong requires only taxes and military service from us. Who remain to us then but the only ones who are not strangers?

GUNNAR D. KUMLIEN.

THE SCREEN

DON'T BE A STAY-AT-HOME

THE Egyptian scenery and archeological stuff in "Valley of the Kings" are so interesting that for long stretches of the film you can almost forget the melodramatics. The story itself isn't too bad: Robert Taylor, as an engineer who worked on the Suez Canal and then switched to archeology, agrees to help Eleanor Parker, who is determined to continue her father's research proving that Joseph really was in Egypt. The villains of the piece, which takes place in and around Cairo in 1900, prove to be Eleanor's husband (Carlos Thompson), who hopes to use the treasures in the looked-for tombs for his own financial gains, and Kurt Kasznar, as an Egyptian version of a grave-robber who is also handy with a dagger.

Director Robert Pirosh, who wrote the script with Karl Tunberg, lets the action get out of hand every now and then when villainy runs rampant. However Pirosh also gives us a lot of Egypt, which has been beautifully photographed in Eastman Color, and there is enough of primer archeology to make you believe that "Valley of the Kings" really was suggested by C. W. Ceram's book, *Gods, Graves and Scholars.*

THE long-awaited serious film made by Alec Guinness proves to be something of a disappointment. It's not that Mr. Guinness can't handle sterner stuff; it's just that "Malta Story" is so diffuse and crowded with characters and heroism that amiable Alec gets

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lost in the shuffle. Surely the continued fortitude displayed by the Maltese and English during World War II, when this Mediterranean island was so important in cutting off Rommel's line of supply, is worthy movie material. But the script by William Fairchild and Nigel Balchin, based on Fairchild's story, insists on telling so many incidents of bravery among both the civilians and British fliers that there's a surfeit of valor, and the film, in spite of its realism, loses much of strength.

Furthermore Brian Desmond Hurst directed his excellent cast (which also includes Jack Hawkins, Flora Robson, Anthony Steel, Muriel Pavlow, Renee Asherson and many other English and Maltese) with an emphasis on understatement. So we have quite a bit of "stout fellas" putting on a "good show" instead of the accurate atmosphere of the really great show that was staged at Malta during the war. This English picture does have its stirring moments and some of the episodes have a quality of great cinema. The star is Malta itself, which was effectively photographed in black and white.

YOU may have seen parts of "Victory at Sea" on television, but whether or not you did, I recommend that you see the whole of this well-edited documentary now. As produced by Henry Salomon (who also wrote the narration with Richard Hanser) "Victory at Sea" as it now stands is one of the great war documentaries. Using clips from Army and Navy records and from other documentaries made during World War II, the film tells a well-rounded story of that period when the land, sea and sky were full of death. It has the expected shots of Hitler and Mussolini meeting in Rome, of burning London, of Pearl Harbor and of fighting at Guadalcanal and many other places on land and sea, but it also has unusual scenes of American industry swinging into action at the beginning of the war, of our old-young men at Solomon Islands, of German submarines around a convoy in the Battle of the Atlantic, of graves and rubble in Italy and of the biggest invasion in history on the day called D.

"Victory at Sea" naturally concentrates on the Pacific—with amazing scenes of the war on the Japanese merchant marine, storms at sea, carriers in action and the Kamikaze fighters (with a memorable sequence showing a duel between our gunners who are fighting to live and the Japanese pilots who are fighting to die). The film ends as it should with wonderful episodes of homecoming after the war. Accompanying these unforgettable visuals are a fine narration, read by Alexander Scourby, and a musical score by Richard Rodgers, which is used effectively throughout to heighten the story told by the pictures.

PHILIP T. HARTUNG.

OF NOTE

THE CATHOLIC EXPERIENCE IN AMERICA

IN the quarterly *Thought,* published by Fordham University (New York 58, N. Y.), Father John Courtney Murray, S. J., has a long article on "American Pluralism." Father Murray considers the Church-State question, putting particular emphasis on the American experience. Here is an excerpt:

> "The life of the law is not logic but experience" has more truth in it than many other Holmesian dicta. When a law ceases to be supported by a continued experience of its goodness, it becomes a dead letter, an empty legal form.
>
> Although pure pragmatism cannot be made the philosophy of law, nonetheless the value of any given law is importantly pragmatic. The First Amendment surely passes this test of good law. In support of it one can adduce an American experience. One might well call it *the* American experience in the sense that it has been central in American history and also unique in the history of the world.
>
> This experience has three facets, all interrelated. First, America has proved by experience that political unity and stability are possible without uniformity of religious belief and practice, without the necessity of any governmental restrictions on any religion. Before the days of the Federal Republic some men had tried to believe that this could be so; thus for instance the *politiques* in France, in their attack upon the classic Gallican and absolutist thesis, "One law, one faith, one king." But this thesis, and its equivalents, had not been finally disproved. This event was accomplished in the United States; and the refutation has been furnished by a manner of argument which is itself irrefutable—an argument from experience.
>
> For a century and a half the United States has displayed to the world the fact that political unity and stability are not inherently dependent on the common sharing of one religious faith. If therefore such a dependence elsewhere exists, it must be explained not in terms of inherent necessity but in terms of particular circumstances. Such circumstances may exist, for instance, in Spain; and undoubtedly the Spaniard must be allowed to argue from his own experience. But it should be made plain that he is arguing from the experience of his own history, and not from the inherent nature of things—the nature of political unity in its relation to religious unity.
>
> The second American experience was that

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stable political unity, which means perduring agreement on the common good of man at the level of performance, is positively strengthened by the exclusion of religious differences from the area of concern allotted to government. In America we have been rescued from the disaster of ideological parties. They are a disaster because, where such parties exist, power becomes a special kind of prize: the struggle for power is a partisan struggle for the means whereby the opposing ideology may be destroyed.

It has been remarked that only in a disintegrating society does politics become a controversy over ends; it should be simply a controversy over means to ends already agreed on with sufficient unanimity. The Latin countries of Europe have displayed this spectacle of ideological politics, a struggle between a host of "isms," all of which pretend to a final view of man and society, with the twin results of governmental paralysis and seemingly irremediable social division. In contrast, the American experience of political unity has been almost Utopian. (Even the Civil War does not refute this view; it was not an ideological conflict but simply, in the more descriptive Southern phrase, a war between the states, a conflict of interests.) To this experience of political unity the First Amendment has made a unique contribution; and in doing so it has qualified as good law.

The third and most striking aspect of the American experience consists in the fact that religion itself, and not least the Catholic Church, has benefited by our free institutions, by the maintenance, even in exaggerated form, of the distinction between Church and State. Within the same span of history the experience of the Church elsewhere, especially in the Latin lands, has been alternatively an experience of privilege or persecution. The reason lay in a particular concept of government. It was alternatively the determination of government to ally itself either with the purposes of the Church or with the purposes of some sect or other (sectarian Liberalism, for instance) which made a similar, however erroneous, claim to possess the full and final truth. The dominant conviction, whose origins are really in pagan antiquity, was that government should represent transcendent truth and by its legal power make this truth prevail. However, in the absence of social agreement as to what the truth really was, the result was to involve the Catholic truth in the vicissitudes of power. It would be difficult to say which experience, privilege or persecution, proved in the end to be the more damaging or gainful to the Church.

In contrast, American government has not undertaken to represent transcendental truth in any of the versions of it current in American society. It does indeed represent the commonly shared moral values of the community. It also represents the supreme religious truth expressed in the motto on American coins: "In God we trust"; the motto expresses the two truths without which, as the Letter to the Hebrews says "nobody reaches God's presence," namely, "to believe that God exists and that he rewards those who try to find him" (Hebrews 11.6).

For the rest, government represents the truth of society as it actually is; and the truth is that American society is religiously pluralist. The truth is lamentable; it is nonetheless true. Many of the beliefs entertained within society ought not to be believed, because they are false; nonetheless men believe them. It is not the function of government to resolve the dispute between conflicting truths, all of which claim the final validity of transcendence. As representative of a pluralist society, wherein religious faith is—as it must be—free, government undertakes to represent the principle of freedom.

In taking this course American government would seem to be on the course set by Pius XII for the religiously pluralist international community, of which America offers, as it were, a pattern in miniature. In the discourse [to the Italian Jurists] he distinguishes two questions: "The first concerns the objective truth and the obligation of conscience toward that which is objectively true and good." This question, he goes on, "can hardly be made the object of discussion and ruling among the individual states and their communities, especially in the case of a plurality of religious confessions within the same community."

In other words, government is not a judge of religious truth; parliaments are not to play the theologian. In accord with this principle American government does not presume to discuss, much less rule upon, the objective truth or falsity of the various religious confessions within society. It puts to itself only Pius XII's second question, which concerns "the practical attitude" of government in the face of religious pluralism. It answers this question by asserting that in the given circumstances it has neither the mandate nor the duty nor the right to legislate either in favor of or against any of the religious confessions existent in American society, which in its totality government must represent. It will therefore only represent their freedom, in the face of civil law, to exist, since they do in fact exist. This is precisely the practical attitude which Pius XII recognizes as right, in the proper moral and political course.

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In consequence of this American concept of the representative function of government, the experience of the Church in America, like the general American experience itself, has proved to be almost Utopian, when one scans it from the viewpoint of the value upon which the Church sets primary importance, namely, her freedom in the fulfillment of her spiritual mission to communicate divine truth and grace to the souls of men, and her equally spiritual mission of social justice and peace. The Church has not enjoyed a privileged status in public life; at the same time she has not had to pay the price of this privilege.

A whole book could be written on the price of such legal privilege. Another book could be written on the value of freedom without privilege. In fact, both books have been written, on the metaphorical pages of history. And looking over his own continually unrolling historical manuscript the American Catholic is inclined to conclude that his is a valid book. It does not develop a doctrinaire thesis, but it does prove a point. This point is that the goodness of the First Amendment as constitutional law is manifested not only by political but also by religious experience. By and large (for no historical record is without blots) it has been good for religion, for Catholicism, to have had simply the right of freedom. This right is at the same time the highest of privileges, and it too has its price. But the price has not been envy and enmity, the coinage in which the Church paid for privilege. It has only been the price of sacrifice, labor, added responsibilities; and these things are redemptive.

COMMUNICATIONS

"CATHOLICS AND POPULATION PROBLEMS"

Minneapolis, Minn.

TO the Editors: A poignant difference of attitude is detectable between your editorial, "Catholics and Population Problems" and the related letter from Arthur M. Churchill [July 9]. The editorial emphasizes that, since we are not allowed to do evil that good might come, God must have another answer to world hunger than contraception. Mr. Churchill, on the other hand, pointed out expertly that if there *is* another answer, it is *not* any of the conventional alternatives proposed by most Catholics, namely world-wide education in "modern" American farming methods through plans like Point Four and complete freedom of emigration.

But there is another alternative to contraception which has not yet received sufficient attention from Catholics. That is the mass-production of the simplest edible plants, algae (in fresh-water), or plankton (harvested from the sea). Your editorial seemed suspicious of placing too much hope on a "revolution in food-production." But this seems to be the *only* hope.

The algal scientists maintain that one of the chief reasons for the imbalance between life and food is the inefficient food-producers (the animals and higher vegetables) relied upon by man up to now to convert sunlight and minerals into edible nourishment. And they propose that we rely henceforth on algae, which are incredibly efficient little photo-synthesizers. For instance, according to the results of recent pilot plant projects, land given over to the mass culture of algae can be expected to produce forty tons of proteins per acre per year, as opposed to one-half of a ton of soy bean protein, or one-eighth of a ton per acre of protein in land devoted to beef! This answers one of Mr. Churchill's difficulties, that the average farmer in the world can't grasp the modern farming methods. One extremely theoretical projection assigns an area the size of Rhode Island as producing enough protein to feed the whole world. With possibilities even remotely as good as this, it should be feasible to centralize algal production enough to allow the technical preparation necessary.

"Hungry people can't wait for the science-fiction future." Yet if we consider the financial extent of American charity as a constant, then the cruel choice is forced on us that every dollar of medical relief for presently-living Asians will worsen the hunger-pains of their children and grandchildren. Likewise every dollar spent on research to eliminate world-hunger at the roots by scientific research is taken from the funds available to give rice to the children who are hungry now. This dilemma can't be wished away, any more than the equally stern choice between spending money to treat lepers or to cure leprosy.

Catholic humanitarianism maintains an agonizing balance between direct and long-range relief. This balance must not be allowed to degenerate into a ruthless, Stalinist sacrifice of living millions to unborn billions—nor into a cruelly sentimental and stubborn emphasis only on direct relief.

I am far from accusing The Commonweal of this last extreme. I am merely pleading for a bigger share of Catholic attention and financial resources to be devoted to research to cure the greatest epidemic killer of them all—world hunger.

Perhaps a foundation could be set up to which Catholics and other Americans of good will could contribute, with the certainty that their money would reach the laboratories and training centers of algal research. It seems, indeed, that many would contribute to such a

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radical program for hunger relief who now feel, with the Red Cross, that direct Asian relief is a hopeless, bottomless pit.

Any readers who wish to exchange ideas for organizing such a foundation might contact me at 4628 Zenith Ave., So., Minneapolis, Minn. And anyone interested in reading more about the possibilities of algal research should look up the April 16, 1954 issue of *Collier's* which features an article called "Bread From the Sea" by Bill Davidson. They might agree then that algal research offers, not a panacea for world hunger, but a seemingly feasible answer to some of the biggest parts of that monstrous problem.

DAN LYONS.

COEXISTENCE

Washington, D. C.

TO the Editors: Your editorial, "Thoughts on 'Coexistence'" [July 16], though clear and reasonable loses much of its force, I think, in not linking that term with the current Anglo-American disagreement on the attitude to take toward the Communist states. Outside that picture you are right in claiming that "'Coexistence' . . . is more a matter of vocabulary than a fundamental change in the world situation." But the recent interest in the word has arisen in a context in which coexistence has a particular meaning. It was Sir Winston Churchill who brought up the idea in a Washington speech recently and I felt he had in his appeal summarized that British view which we Americans seem to have so much difficulty in accommodating. I think I can adequately describe Sir Winston's coexistence as a desire to deal with the Communist states on traditional diplomatic levels and in tradtional diplomatic ways.

To many Americans this version of coexistence would mean appeasement and a show of weakness. American public men in the last few years have repeatedly said things like, "The only thing the Communists understand is force" and "You can't do business with the Reds." This attitude seems to be the other side of the policy debate, opposing the British inclination. What it means to what appears to be a large number of Americans is that everything but complete segregation broken by periods of aggressiveness in relations with the Communist powers is weak and negative.

We can best judge the latter view by ascertaining what "diplomacy," as used above, means. Americans, I believe, have a different concept of that word from the British. Most Americans, I would venture to say (and this includes policy-makers), have an idea of diplomacy as mere representation, as formal, traditional, but purely passive practice. The slightest acquaintance with the diplomatic history of the British (or of any continental power) is enough to dispel the idea of diplomacy as a placid ritual.

Diplomatic practice in its broadest historical sense means personal intercourse. In that phrase is included every sort of meeting between men of different countries as spokesmen for their respective states. It implies the thousand unspoken ways in which men influence one another when they meet often to resolve various differences. It holds as a premise that men are rational before they are Russian, Fascist, Communist or Chinese. It supposes that no state or group has history in its pocket, just as no individual can graph his future.

To be successful diplomacy requires power, but power in its most passive, most static sense, as a talking-point. It implies mutual concessions, not on essential differences, but in secondary matters, the sacrificing of which is worth the temporary relaxation it brings. It is not a cowardly procedure, nor does it necessarily mean weakness or surrender. It has been the usual way of the West, in spite of what one might suppose from the number of wars that have broken out.

There are forceful arguments for the impracticability of entering on such a course with the Communist "ideological man." Their force is not lessened by a realization of what it is they oppose. Most Americans, I think, are not clear as to what the British propose and consider it only as a counsel of weakness to be expected from an empire in decline. But if Sir Winston wants to give a chance to traditional diplomacy, he is far from suggesting retreat or appeasement, as I have tried to point out.

And in the present world predicament, the old diplomatic way does have a real advantage for the United States. In a sense, American intransigence and implicit suspicion concerning everything in the Communist states puts us in a position very similar to the "ideological man" and his conviction that the capitalist and socialist systems cannot coexist. If you say, "There's no dealing with the Reds," you are really subscribing to the Communist dictum. But it is not the way of the West to set up absolutes in the area of political tactics. That is the error of our enemies, and reason should warn us against the temptation. Yet twice in two generations the American people have fought wars which were described as ultimate, in which we, the good, ostensibly came to grips with the very principle of evil.

I think the same tendency is visible today in our reaction to the Communist menace. It is one of the main causes, in my opinion, for our dislike of "coexistence" in the British sense. Yet if that British attitude came to be adopted by us we might over a period of time develop, not a less vigilant, but a less neurotic (for want of a better term) conception of Communism. It would then perhaps appear, not as the ultimate evil

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of the world incarnate, but as merely another dangerous debasing of reason which has acquired political power as others before it have. We would maybe come to realize that Communism in the long run is its own worst enemy. We might become aware that, though we must diligently guard ourselves against it, we must not allow it to distract us from the worship of God, the cultivation of reason, the pursuit of the good and the spreading of justice.

GEORGE E. DUBE.

BEHIND THE SNAPPY RED DOORS

The New York Girls

JOE DEVER

HE was sitting in the reception lounge of the Zeff Publishing Company office suite when one of them walked in. This was a good place to see them, he knew, and, sure enough, a cardinal red door snapped outward and one of them came through.

"Are you Mr. Fleem?" she asked. "Mr. Hal Fleem?"

He could not answer for several moments, looking at how long and lacquered she was; the high green pumps, trim legs, the sweep and curve of her figure, and the poise, all the poise. She was one of them, all right, one of those he had thought about while reading magazines in a Texas army camp, one of those he had seen in this same lounge while on furlough several months before; she was one of the New York girls.

"Yes," he said finally, through his blushes, "I'm Hal Fleem."

She smiled sympathetically then, a full-page-ad smile.

"Very well, Mr. Fleem, Mr. Worthin will see you right away."

He followed her through the snapping red door and there were more of them sitting around desks, typing and talking, or browsing languidly through file cabinets. They were all dressed for a party, it seemed, and he trembled a little to think that this Worthin guy might give him the job.

They walked across the floor toward several glass-paneled private offices and he saw Mr. Worthin's name on one of them: Mr. Charles I. Worthin, Personnel. There were two desks in his office and at one of them he sat, prim and erect behind a Charlie Chaplin mustache.

"This is Mr. Fleem, Mr. Worthin," the exotic one said, smiling, this time a thin secretarial smile.

"Hello, hello," Mr. Worthin said with a creasy smile and a slight inclination of the head. He arose, offered a hand, limp and damp.

"Sit right down, Mr. Fleem," he said.

Fleem sat down and so did the New York girl; she, at her typewriter, glowing there behind him like a flamingo, lithe, soft and warm with multi-colors. He wondered if she hung her stockings over the bath tub to dry as he had seen them hang their stockings in a picture magazine. Maybe she wore Russian pajamas while listening, alone, to the symphony on Sunday afternoons.

Mr. Worthin picked up his application and said: "Now, let's see."

"Mmmmm," Worthin continued. "Twenty-four; unmarried; high-school graduate; editor, high school magazine, *Excalibur;* recent army service as an orderly-room clerk.

"I see you're from Peoria, Mr. Fleem. Live there now?"

"My parents are there," Fleem said. "I hope to settle in New York."

I hope to settle in New York, Fleem repeated mentally, settle here forever with all the New York girls in one-room apartments. Hope to eat goulash off shaky card tables, hope to buy charcoal gray suits at Brooks Brothers, hope to meet someone for a drink at the Biltmore between trains. Hope to see all your company's writers, Mr. Worthin, hear all the talk about their various stages of quiet desperation. Hope to work my way up in New York, Mr. Worthin, become a reader, maybe an editor, maybe eventually editor-in-chief. Read all about it in the army, Mr. Worthin, all about Perkins and Wolfe, Auden and Isherwood, Greene and Waugh, Woolcott and Thompson. Hope to stay here with the New York girls in publishing houses and see what happens behind the snappy red doors.

"Well," said Mr. Worthin, "there is, as you know, a job open here for a young man."

He put one finger to his little nose-pelt, coddling it.

"It's a glorified office-boy's job—doesn't pay much for a fellow your age—thirty-three dollars a week, to be perfectly frank. Would you really be interested in that kind of money?"

Author of two novels, Mr. Dever has contributed short stories and sketches to a number of magazines.

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Fleem nodded, restraining himself. "Yes, I would, I'd like working around a big publishing house like this."

"There really isn't much chance of advancement," the office manager said with just a hint of cruelty.

Mr. Worthin had himself been the office boy, once, with dreams of becoming a book editor. Twenty years had gone by, the New York girls had come and gone, new editors, glittery with academic degrees, heavy with literary connections in Europe and among the little magazines, had moved up and down Madison Avenue. One day Mr. Roland, Mr. Worthin's elderly predecessor as office manager, had died quietly in bed. A note had been found on the table by his bed, addressed to Worthin:

"Please tell Mr. Zeff I will not be in this morning."

"Such gentle irony!" shrewd, scholarly Mr. Zeff had said to Worthin when he read Roland's obituary note. "Well, Worthin, you'll have to carry on."

Office manager—a good position, yes. But you could be office manager in a pharmaceutical company or anywhere. It was not what Miss Curlew and he had planned.

Miss Curlew was then secretary to Mr. Zeff. Worthin had eaten goulash on her card table because of her closeness to the throne. She had done what she could: showed Mr. Zeff dull but competent book reviews Worthin had published in *The New Echelon;* she had importuned writer friends to mention Worthin to the publisher at cocktail parties. Confidential secretaries can be confidential. She had even dared, after a winey Christmas-party kiss, to alert Mr. Zeff to Worthin's eligibility for advancement.

With Roland's death, Mr. Zeff therefore felt he was pleasing both her and Worthin in making the latter office manager, or company shepherd of the New York girls.

Worthin and Miss Curlew, in their bewildered inertia, trended into wedlock and exchanged an interminable series of curious looks across the shaky card table.

"NOT much chance of advancement," Hal Fleem thought. "That's what he says."

"If I meet your requirements, I'll be glad to accept the salary," Fleem replied with a certain winsome shyness.

"Very well," Worthin said. "Miss Marr, will you have Mr. Fleem take the test?"

Miss Marr rustled all her New York clothes as she leaned deep and opened a bottom desk drawer.

"Will you come with me, Mr. Fleem?"

He went, he saw, the New York girls, like Sunday paper ads come alive, conquered him again.

Miss Marr led him into an empty office and directed him to a plain metal table.

"All applicants for positions here take the psycho-semantic test," she said casually. "Even the editors."

"You've probably taken similar tests in the service. True or false, and so on."

"Oh, yes," Fleem said, sitting.

She flicked her wrist, pursed her lips and glanced at one of those starlet TV watches.

"It's two-fifteen now. You have until quarter of three. Any questions?"

"Pencil or ink?" he asked, anxious to be intelligent.

"Pencil will do. Good luck!" she concluded brightly.

"Miss Marr," he said impulsively.

"Yes?"

"May I ask you an odd question?"

"Odd?" she asked, doing something crinkly with her nose.

"Yes, I suppose so," Fleem said.

"What is it?" she asked in a throaty way, as if he were about to propose.

"Do you—do a lot of the New York girls live in one-room apartments on the East Side?"

She frowned, then sensing his Peoria earnestness, warmed into a smile.

"Yes, I suppose a lot of us do—I know I do."

"Well, frankly," Hal began, "is it true that a lot of you eat goulash off shaky card tables and dry your lingerie in the bathroom and lie around listening to the symphony on Sundays—alone?"

Then Miss Marr struck a lovely, backward-leaning stance and laughed richly out of the serpentine perfection of her body.

"Oh, no," she said, laughing long and richly, "oh, no, no, no!"

She left him with gay, subsiding laughter and he, flustered, yet warmed by the sympathetic lilt of her mirth, turned to the psycho-semantic test.

There were twenty-nine questions:

He matched authors with titles: *Oliver Twist,* Charles Dickens, of course; *The Fountainhead,* Ayn Rand. He numbered certain octagons as belonging within larger octagons and dared to wonder if this might signify something about his libido. Finally, after deciding whether Iran and Persia were one and the same place, as also Manchukuo and Manchuria, he came to the second last question.

It was a long paragraph calling for punctuation and rearrangement of sentences where needed. It concerned the essence of a book editor, the sanctity and dignity of his profession. He read slowly, soberly, reflecting, and then went through it again, correcting the errors in punctuation and paragraphing.

The last question was almost querulous:

Why do you want to work for a book publisher? Answer briefly and succinctly.

A minute and a half to go. He nibbled at his lower lip and then applied his pencil and wrote rapidly as if

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inspired:

"There is no frigate like a book
To take us lands away . . ."

BELOW, on the street floor, he sat at a disc-like table in a subdued cocktail lounge, feeling quite dignified behind a forty-cent bottle of beer. The same beverage was probably fifteen cents a glass at the bar, but his strategic position was worth at least another quarter.

Here by the window he could watch the main entrance of the adjoining publishers' building. The waitress had informed him that many of the publishing people stopped here for a drink just after work at five. He had thought as much.

Perhaps she, too, might come in among the New York girls, chattering over their Manhattans and smoking king-size cigarettes with knowing, graceful fury.

Miss Marr had been rather cool and officious when he handed her the completed quiz forms.

"When will I know, Miss Marr?"

"If you'll call tomorrow morning at nine-thirty . . ." she had said with a rather wintry smile.

He was determined, however, to know tonight. So he waited in the cocktail lounge, hoping she would come in with the others, knowing she would have the answer—with one of those ready-answer charts she could evaluate the quiz in a matter of minutes.

5:00; 5:01; 5:02; 5:03.

The beer level descended. Another bottle.

They came in lilt and flutter, out of the building entrance, clock-clock-clock, into the lounge, bright and lean and lacquered.

He looked up slowly, braking his eagerness.

The laughter then, gay, lightsome, Miss Marr recalling an English novelist with popping black eyes, defiant black derby, tightly rolled umbrella.

"You can't imagine!" she said, chuckling and toying with a plastic mixer. "You simply can't imagine."

He waited until they had almost consumed their drinks. He waited, slowing the race of his pulse with a cool process of the mind. He would offer, through the waitress, to buy her and her friends a round. Nothing vulgar; a gesture of gratitude, win or lose.

He motioned for the waitress and explained softly, his boyish shyness overcoming any hint of the masher.

". . . a sort of gesture, win or lose," he said with a shy smile. "And keep the change."

"Thank you," the waitress said, taking the currency.

She did his bidding and Miss Marr looked his way a little alarmed. He smiled and nodded, serene, contained, as if to say: "It's just a job."

A tilt of chin at her three girl friends, a question, a laugh. "Yes, yes, all around." And then a decorous smile in his direction.

"I'll wander over casually," he thought. It was like a line of dialogue from a script. He savored the line mentally: "I'll wander over casually."

He did. He got up and went over there, easy and graceful.

MISS Marr thanked him and introduced her girl friends by their first names only. They regarded him with mirthful courtesy, suspicious of the first free drink, secure against a new man, haughty before the nebulous prospect of possible and even desirable involvement.

Avoiding the subject of his employment quiz, he talked of the excitement of New York, its glitter, packed streets, soaring buildings; he talked of New York with completely defenseless naiveté.

"Where are you from?" one of the girls asked him, with a slightly sly twinkle.

"Peoria," Hal said earnestly.

They tried not to smile: two drank, one fished in her handbag, one coughed, stifling a giggle behind her long gleaming talons.

Miss Marr emerged from her handbag.

"*I've* got to go," she said, running her announcement up the scale fetchingly. "Thanks again for the drink."

"Yes, thank you," the gilded creatures echoed.

"You're very welcome," Fleem said.

He'd ask her now—now or never.

"I've been wondering—I mean—could you tell me my chances?"

She looked at him directly, almost warmly, then averted her face with a shade of distress. "Well . . . ," she said reluctantly, "you didn't do too well."

The acorn of all our childhoods swelled newly in his throat.

"Not well," he said with uncontrollable chagrin.

"You received close to a passing mark, but Mr. Worthin decided your background doesn't quite suit you for the publishing business."

The acorn swelled tightly.

"Oh, I see."

"Let's go, Ann," said one of the gleaming ones.

"Why don't you take a cab with us, Ann?" another added as they gathered themselves to go.

"No cab for me," Miss Marr said. "I can get to the East Side faster by crosstown bus. Cheaper, too."

"Goodbye, Mr. Fleem," she said, shaking his hand, "better luck next time."

"Goodbye and thanks," he said lamely, watching them pass in an opulent flutter through the revolving doors.

The job was gone; New York, for him, no more. One thing, at least, was true—a truth he could relate back in Peoria: You can get to the East Side by crosstown bus, faster than by cab.

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A Search for Universality That Led Too Far From Home

A FABLE. By William Faulkner. Random House. $4.75.

By VIVIAN MERCIER

WHAT is universality? How does a writer achieve it? Having won a world-wide reputation and a Nobel Prize at a surprisingly early age, William Faulkner ought to know if anybody does. Partly, I suspect, as a gesture to his world-wide audience, he has recently completed *A Fable,* a long novel first conceived in 1944, which for several years he couldn't seem to get finished. Patterned on the life of Christ —and particularly on the Crucifixion—set against a background of World War I in France, having an international cast of characters, and unfolding as its central theme man's age-long aspiration to end war forever, *A Fable* might seem assured of universal appeal. There is little doubt that it will be widely read for a year or two, but I cannot believe that it will weigh any heavier in Faulkner's account with Posterity than Mark Twain's book on Joan of Arc weighs in his.

Faulkner did not win—and deserve — his present reputation by taking the world for his oyster; he won it by making his oyster-bed into a world. The closer his novels centered about the city of "Jefferson" in the State of Mississippi, the more magnetic did his influence become. Just before reading *A Fable* I re-read my own favorite Faulkner, *Go Down, Moses,* technically a book of short stories but actually as integrated a novel as Faulkner has written. As any Irish Faulkner fan, Catholic or Protestant, will gladly tell you, his novels of Mississippi make complete sense to anyone who knows County Derry, or even parts of County Donegal—or anywhere else in this tormented world where conquerors and conquered have confronted each other down the centuries. My maternal grandmother's family hung onto a "plantation" in County Derry for nearly three centuries, only to lose at last what had never been theirs in the first place. Faulkner's McCaslins, who have bastards by their slaves, are not very different from my ancestors, who had bastards by their tenants. (One of these unscheduled collaterals of mine became a Texas judge.) By helping me to understand the Southern Negro and the Southern white, Faulkner has helped me to understand my own blood. *That* is universality.

Faulkner's best writing has for me the same Dionysian, self-destructive quality as Dostoevsky's. Its constant assault on the nerves makes me reluctant to begin a new, uncharted Faulkner book, although I can return again and again to the terrors of a Faulkner (or a Dostoevsky) that I have once mapped out. I think *A Fable* suggests what would have happened had Dostoevsky ever tried to write a *War and Peace*—an introvert trying to write an extrovert's novel. It is a pity that Faulkner's deepest creative instinct, which delayed the writing of this novel so long, did not succeed in thwarting it altogether.

On the other hand, Dostoevsky *did* write a novel around a Christ-figure, *The Idiot,* as successful a work of art as any such novel is ever likely to be. The reasons for Dostoevsky's success, partial as it was, may by contrast supply the reasons for Faulkner's almost total failure: (1) Dostoevsky's Prince Muishkin is shown to us almost exclusively within the framework of the St. Petersburg life that was most familiar to his creator; (2) Dostoevsky's nineteenth-century Christ-fig-figure paralleled the life of Jesus in the spirit rather than the letter—he consorted with publicans and sinners, he loved all mankind, and he tried to follow the teaching of the Sermon on the Mount. At most, we might find in *The Idiot* analogues of Judas and Mary Magdalene.

If Faulkner had followed Dostoevsky's example, his twentieth-century Christ-figure would have lived and died in Mississippi; instead he is a corporal who leads the mutiny of an entire French regiment and thus halts the war for a week; this corporal is the fruit of adultery between the Marshal of France who is Allied Supreme Commander and an obscure Balkan peasant woman whose husband has already given her two daughters, Martha and Mary; Mary Magdalene, from a Marseilles brothel, is the corporal's wife or betrothed.

I don't pretend to have seen all the analogies in a first reading, but here are some others: a Judas and a Peter are in evidence among the corporal's twelve-man squad (as well as a Paul!); born in a stable, the corporal undergoes a Temptation when his general-father (becoming Satan for the nonce) offers to let him escape; he eats a Last Supper with his squad in jail and is shot tied to a cross between two thieves; afterwards a sergeant-major (centurion?) hands his body over to his weeping women-folk. His body, having been buried on his brother-in-law's farm in the St. Mihiel salient, disappears when a shell bursts on the grave, but is later discovered by accident and equally accidentally reburied in Paris as the Unknown Soldier. Had enough?

Apart from implying that the Christ of today is the Unknown Soldier, the book seems to offer as its "message" a hodge-podge of clichés. The old general says to his corporal-son, who refuses to escape being shot: "Afraid? No no, it's not I but you who are afraid of man; not I but you who believe that nothing but a death can save him. I know better. I know that he has that in him that will enable him to outlast even his wars; that in him more durable than all his vices, even that last and most fearsome one; to outlast even this next avatar of his servitude which he now faces: his enslavement to the demonic progeny of his own mechanical curiosity, from which he will emancipate himself by that one ancient tried-and-true method by which slaves have always freed themselves: by inculcating their masters with the slaves' own vices—in this case the vice of war

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and that other one which is no vice at all but instead is the quality-mark and warrant of man's immortality: his deathless folly." This speech does not, of course, completely sum up Faulkner's own position, but the only satisfactory answer the corporal gives to it is to insist on being executed. A priest says that *both* the general and his son are right.

This priest, who comes to give the corporal the last rites, but commits suicide instead — a piece of symbolism that baffles me so far— says: "It wasn't He with his humility and pity and sacrifice that converted the world; it was pagan and bloody Rome which did it with His martyrdom; furious and intractable dreamers had been bringing that same dream out of Asia Minor for three hundred years until at last one found a caesar foolish enough to crucify him. And you are right. But then so is he (I don't mean Him now, I mean the old man in that white room yonder onto whose shoulders you are trying to slough and shirk your right and duty for free will and decision). Because only Rome could have done it. . . ."

Mixed up with the stock ideas and the stock characters—the only German general in the book wears a monocle — are some genuine Faulkner figures and episodes. Notable among these is an American boy in the Royal Air Force, who commits suicide, apparently in grief because the war is over and he can never become an ace. There is also a fifty-page sequence about a stolen horse and its three handlers—they race it all over the Southern States —which has a very tenuous connection with the rest of the book. I was struck by the sudden gain in speed of narration, in density of atmosphere, in richness of overtones, in ripeness of humor, as soon as the novel thus found itself, all too briefly, in Faulkner country. The indomitable three-legged horse that would sooner win races than retire to stud probably symbolizes the human qualities that Faulkner wishes to celebrate better than do all his attempts to re-create, in humanistic terms, the symbols of the Gospels, which must, for Christians, in the last analysis embody a superhuman reality.

The Saint of Siena

CATHERINE OF SIENA. By Sigrid Undset. Translated by Kate Austin-Lund. Sheed & Ward. $3.50.

By HELEN C. WHITE

AT first sight Catherine of Siena would seem a strange choice for the pen of Sigrid Undset. Whether one thinks of her in the unearthly loveliness of Andrea Vanni's great portrait, or in the heaven-storming aspirations of her own *Dialogue,* or in the brilliant legend still haunting the magic settings of Papal Avignon and her own Siena, this most exquisite of ecstatics would hardly seem the appropriate subject for one of the most robust and realistic talents ever to pierce the

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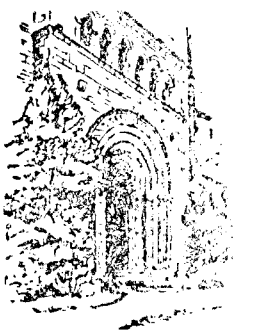

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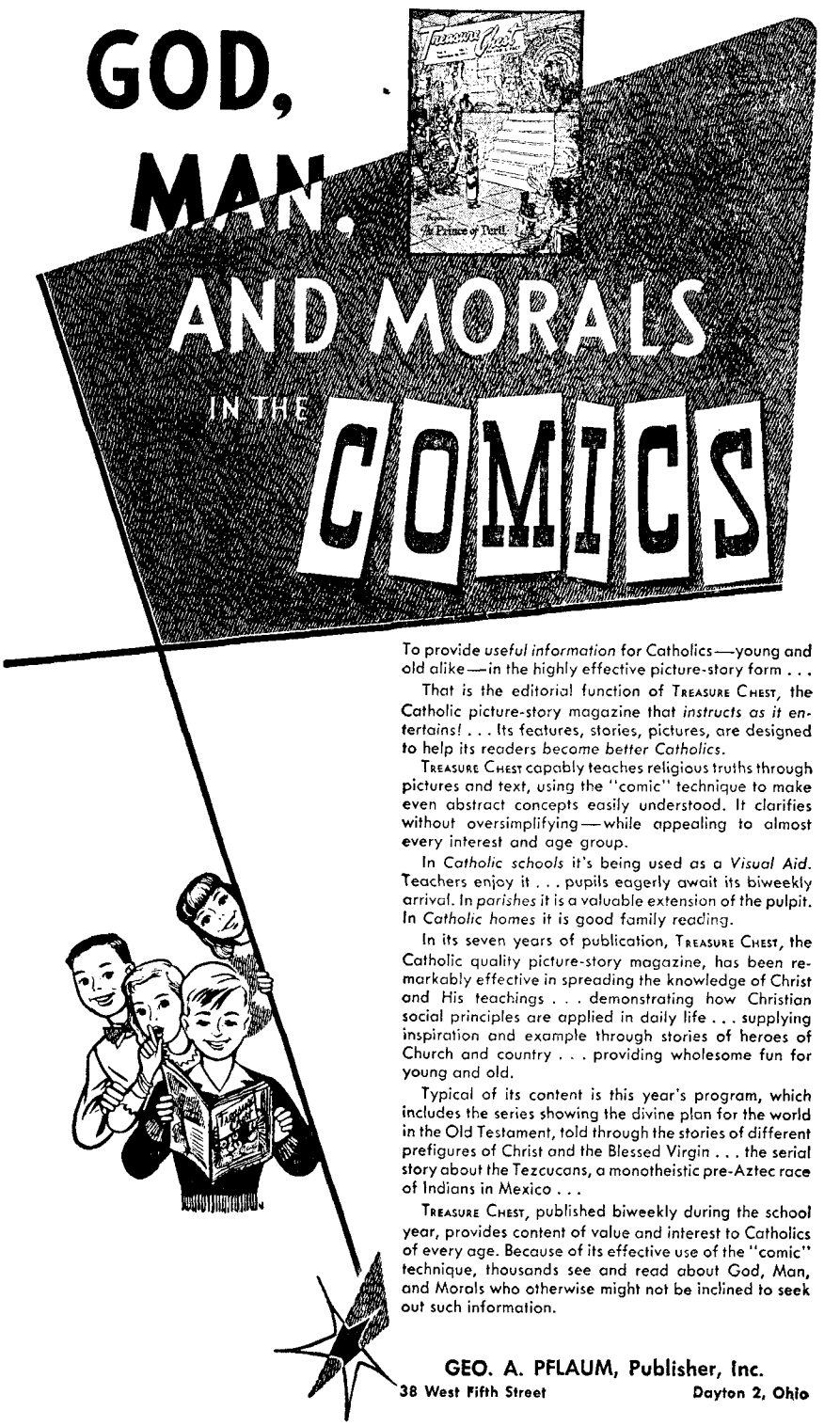
medieval haze of the modern romancer. Sigrid Undset's Catherine is certainly a more startling and even at times disconcerting personality than the usual vision of hagiography, but it is easier to believe that this woman did do the things which Catherine historically did. The great medievalist's effort to present her heroine in her daily habit as she lived in her particular world of time and place, and all too human humanity, has resulted in a portrait at once more full-blooded and, surprisingly, more edifying than the traditional image.

To begin with, Catherine is very much a woman of fourteenth-century Siena, devoted to her family, tenderly delighting in children, practical and homely in all her ways, and yet endowed with an artist's acuteness of sensibility to the grace of the natural world. She has the characteristic medieval intolerance of squeamishness, and the detail with which her biographer presents the volunteer nurse's efforts to overcome her natural repugnance to the squalor, physical and spiritual, of some of her patients, is not always easy on the stomach of her modern reader. But the result is a salutary reminder that charity though more possible for a saint is not necessarily easier.

And Sigrid Undset reminds us, too, that the age in which Catherine lived and worked was not by any means made to order for her. Two sentences conjure up a world, alas, only too familiar to us: "On March 20th the army of the anti-papal league captured Bologna. But the following week the papal troops under John Hawkwood took Casena, massacred the men and gave the women to the soldiers." There is, however, a special horror in that word "papal" that reminds us of how much the modern Christian, who listens to Catherine pleading with Urban for mercy, has to be thankful for in the richly-earned contemporary papal reputation for compassion. Schism added to the terror of the times, too, and yet Sigrid Undset never lets us forget that this was an age of tremendous creative activity in which religion was at the heart of all man's living, and saints could be popular heroes.

Not that Catherine was immune to calumny. "Hypocrite" was the most damning of the charges, "witch," the most dangerous. It was characteristic of Catherine that she was stopped by neither. What had to be done as God's tool, she did, and what Christ gave her to say she said, whether she faced a murderous mob or a skeptical theologian, whether she strove for the reconciliation of one of the numberless victims of the world's injustice or the return of a timid Pope to his duty to Rome. For always she drew upon that measureless wellspring of inspiration and insight which she received in her ecstasies. Of the external manifestations of those ecstasies we have abundant evidence



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Books

This week's Commonweal illustrates the reason for the magazine's literary reputation. Vivian Mercier's sensitive evaluation of the newest Faulkner work and Helen C. White's distinguished review of the last book by Sigrid Undset in this issue can be cited from among the many reviews which have won the respect of writers, publishers and the literary public.

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from her spiritual family; of their internal content we have the evidence of the *Dialogue,* one of the masterpieces of Italian literature, and one of the great mystical books of the world. It is this extraordinary sense of Catherine "hovering on two wings . . . over the abyss between time and eternity," that gives Sigrid Undset's passionate realism such persuasiveness in this very remarkable book, finished not long before her own death.

"Catholicisms"

CHURCH AND SOCIETY. Edited by Joseph N. Moody. Arts, Inc. (New York). $12.

By EDWARD S. SKILLIN

THE extent to which the Church takes color from, or reacts vigorously to, the various conditions she encounters in individual countries is seldom taken into account sufficiently. Yet how could such variety be otherwise? The "Catholicisms" of Spain, Germany, Ireland, the Slavic countries, Italy, the United States and France, though not actually varying in basic orthodoxy, manifest wide differences in emphasis, temper and traditions. Or consider the special characteristics Catholicism has developed in such lands as China and India, among the Eskimos or on the Dark Continent.

Father Moody's massive volume tends to bring out some of these national differences — at times sketchily, but with considerable competence and in great detail in the cases of France, Belgium and Germany, particularly the latter, which is expertly and exhaustively handled by Dr. Edgar Alexander. The theme throughout is the Church in relation to the social question in various countries during the last century and a half.

The travail of French Catholics is fairly well known over here. Ever since the Revolution they suffered vicissitudes at the hands of the State, culminating in the anti-clerical laws of the turn of the century. They have likewise been on the defensive in the labor movement, with their own Christian unions considerably

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weaker than the Communist-dominated CGT. Yet all the while, their social philosophers have been assiduously and brilliantly at work and their ideas, together with activities like the *mouvements specialises,* have been establishing patterns for the rest of the Catholic world.

Germany's battles for religious liberty under Bismarck are generally known to Americans. That from time to time Germany has had to contend with inept or shortsighted clerical intervention in politics is less understood. This was unhappily the case immediately before Hitler and contributed materially to the disastrous consequences.

In general, however, Dr. Alexander makes a convincing case for the Center Party, which, although confessional, cut across regional, economic, class and, to a certain extent, ideological lines. There was recurring tension between the party's well-entrenched clerical-aristocratic adherents and its supporters from the strong Christian labor unions — a basic cleavage which boded ill for the German crisis of the 1930's.

This volume supplies plentiful data on these and other leading developments that show how the Church has tangled with social issues in both theoretical and practical terms. It records achievements and also faces up to some of the more important mistakes committed in the name of the Church in a number of countries. The bibliography is intensive and is supplemented by quite a sprinkling of apposite excerpts from papal documents and the writings of leaders of Catholic social thought in a number of countries.

Church and Society is a volume that can hardly henceforth be ignored by anyone seriously interested in the Church's solicitous attitude on the social problems of these troubled times.

REVIEWERS

Vivian Mercier is the co-author of "1,000 Years of Irish Prose." Mr. Mercier teaches at Columbia and City College of New York.

Helen C. White, of the University of Wisconsin, is the author of several historical novels.

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